

Adopt CHAPTER Env-Ws 1900 to read as follows:

## CHAPTER Env-Ws 1900 RULES FOR THE PROTECTION OF INSTREAM FLOW ON DESIGNATED RIVERS

Statutory Authority: RSA 483:9-c; RSA 483:11,IV; 2002, 278:2,II

### PART Env-Ws 1901 PURPOSE AND APPLICABILITY

Env-Ws 1901.01 Purpose. The purpose of these rules is to specify standards, criteria, and procedures by which a protected instream flow shall be established and enforced for each designated river segment on the Lamprey River and the Souhegan River in order to maintain water for instream public uses and to protect the resources for which the river or river segment is designated.

Env-Ws 1901.02 Applicability. The requirements set forth in Env-Ws 1900 shall apply to:

- (a) Designated segments, under RSA 483, on the Lamprey and Souhegan Rivers and their tributary drainage areas;
- (b) Affected water users on the Lamprey and Souhegan Rivers; and
- (c) Affected dam owners on the Lamprey and Souhegan Rivers.

### PART Env-Ws 1902 DEFINITIONS

Env-Ws 1902.01 “7Q10” means the lowest average flow rate for a period of 7 consecutive days on an annual basis with an expected recurrence interval of once in every 10 years, determined at a fixed location on a river or stream, and expressed in terms of volume per time period.

Env-Ws 1902.02 “Affected dam owner” means an owner of a dam with an impoundment with a surface area greater than 10 acres in the watershed area of a designated river.

Env-Ws 1902.03 “Affected water user” means a water user required to be registered under Env-Wr 700, or successor rules, and having a withdrawal or return location within 500 feet of a designated river or within 500 feet of a river or stream in its tributary drainage area.

Env-Ws 1902.04 “Aggregate water use” means the total water use by all affected water users at, and upstream from, any location on a designated river, being the difference between the sum of water withdrawals and the sum of measured registered water returns.

Env-Ws 1902.05 “Commissioner” means the commissioner of the New Hampshire department of environmental services.

Env-Ws 1902.06 “cfs/m” means cubic feet per second of flow per square mile of stream drainage area.

Env-Ws 1902.07 “Department” means the New Hampshire department of environmental services.

Env-Ws 1902.08 “Designated river” means a river or river segment that is designated under RSA 483.

Env-Ws 1902.09 “Governing body” means the board of selectmen in a town, the board of mayor and aldermen in a city or the council in a city or town with a council, or the county commissioners in unincorporated towns and unorganized places.

Env-Ws 1902.10 “Lakes management advisory committee (LMAC)” means the committee established under RSA 483-A:6.

Env-Ws 1902.11 “Local river management advisory committee (LRMAC)” means a committee established under RSA 483:8-a.

Env-Ws 1902.12 “Rivers management advisory committee (RMAC)” means the committee established under RSA 483:8.

Env-Ws 1902.13 “Segment” means a portion of a designated river assigned to one of the classifications identified in RSA 483:7-a.

Env-Ws 1902.14 “Water management planning area (WMPA)” means the tributary drainage area to a designated river for which a water management plan is required.

#### PART Env-Ws 1903 DE MINIMIS AMOUNT AND ESTIMATION OF AGGREGATE WATER USE

Env-Ws 1903.01 De Minimis Amount. A de minimis amount shall be an aggregate water use at any location equal to 5 percent of 7Q10 at that location.

Env-Ws 1903.02 De Minimis Amount Available For Use. The de minimis amount shall be always available for use.

Env-Ws 1903.03 Estimation and Report of Aggregate Water Use and Streamflow.

(a) Each year the department shall:

(1) For each designated river, estimate aggregate average monthly water use and average monthly stream flow; and

(2) For each designated river without established protected instream flows under Env-Ws 1906, estimate the month(s) and identify the location(s) not in compliance with the general standard.

(b) For each designated river with protected instream flows established under Env-Ws 1906, the department shall keep a record of the date(s) and location(s) at which protected instream flows were not maintained.

(c) A designated river shall be not in compliance with the general standard if:

- (1) The average aggregate monthly water use exceeds 5 percent of 7Q10 when average monthly stream flow is less than or equal to 0.5 cfs;
- (2) The average aggregate monthly water use exceeds 0.02 cfs when average monthly stream flow is greater than 0.5 cfs and less than or equal to 1.0 cfs;
- (3) The average aggregate monthly water use exceeds 0.04 cfs when average monthly stream flow is greater than 1.0 cfs and less than or equal to 4 cfs; or
- (4) The average aggregate monthly water use exceeds 0.16 cfs when average monthly stream flow is greater than 4 cfs.

(d) The general standard shall not apply to hydroelectric facilities for the river locations between their point of withdrawal and point of return.

(e) Each year the department shall publish a report on aggregate water use and streamflow for the previous year.

(f) The report shall be published no later than June first.

(g) The report shall include:

- (1) An estimate of water use for each affected water user;
- (2) An estimate of aggregate water use at each withdrawal or return location;
- (3) An estimate of stream flow at each withdrawal or return location;
- (4) A record of the month(s) and location(s) not in compliance with the general standard for designated rivers without established protected instream flows under Env-Ws 1906;
- (5) A description of the WMPA for designated river(s) that are not in compliance with the general standard; and
- (6) For each designated river with protected instream flows established under Env-Ws 1906, a record of the date(s) and location(s) at which protected instream flows were not maintained.

PART Env-Ws 1904 PROTECTED INSTREAM FLOWS AND WATER MANAGEMENT  
PLANS

Env-Ws 1904.01 Establishment of Protected Instream Flows and Adoption of Water Management Plans. The department shall establish protected instream flows and adopt water management plans for the WMPAs of the designated segments of the Lamprey and Souhegan Rivers, as defined by RSA 483:15, I and RSA 483:15, XIII, respectively.

Env-Ws 1904.02 Sequence. The department shall establish scientifically-supported protected instream flows prior to adoption of the water management plan for a WMPA.

#### PART Env-Ws 1905 PROCEDURE FOR ESTABLISHMENT OF PROTECTED INSTREAM FLOWS

Env-Ws 1905.01 Elements. To establish protected instream flows:

(a) The department shall:

- (1) Conduct a protected instream flow study and propose protected instream flows based on scientifically-accepted ecological methods as provided in Env-Ws 1905.02;
- (2) Make the study available for public review; and
- (3) Hold a public hearing and receive comments on the study and the recommended protected instream flows as provided in Env-Ws 1905.03;

(b) The commissioner shall issue a decision establishing protected instream flows for the designated river, as provided in Env-Ws 1905.04.

Env-Ws 1905.02 Protected Instream Flow Study. The protected instream flow study shall:

(a) For each river segment designated under RSA 483:15, identify and catalog all outstanding characteristics listed under RSA 483:1;

(b) For each river segment designated under RSA 483:15, identify and catalog all instream public uses on the designated river listed under RSA 483:9-c,I, and all designated uses under the federal Clean Water Act;

(c) For each river segment designated under RSA 483:15, identify and catalog all resources listed under RSA 483:6,IV,(a)for which the river or segment is designated;

(d) Identify and catalog all documents and reports relative to a segment's outstanding characteristics, the resources for which the river is designated, and instream public uses, including:

- (1) Designated river nomination reports;
- (2) River corridor management plans;

- (3) Water quality studies;
- (4) Natural heritage inventory;
- (5) Fishery and aquatic resource studies;
- (6) Environmental assessments;
- (7) Environmental impact statements; and
- (8) Other applicable reports and documents;

(e) Include an on-the-water stream survey of all resources that identifies and catalogs from direct observation:

- (1) Fish;
- (2) Wildlife;
- (3) Macroinvertebrates;
- (4) Plants;
- (5) Recreational uses;
- (6) Characteristics identified in (b) above;
- (7) Instream public uses identified in (c) above; and
- (8) Resources identified in (d) above;

(f) Identify and document method(s) that are consistent with applicable designated uses and water quality standards, for establishing a protected instream flow that conserve and protect the outstanding characteristics, instream public uses and resources identified in (b), (c), (d), and (f) above;

(g) For each segment, determine and document a recommended, scientifically-based protected instream flow based on application of the method(s) identified in (g) above, and applicable water quality standards; and

(h) For each segment classified natural under RSA 483:7-a, assess the effect on recommended protected instream flows of inclusion as an outstanding resource water under the provisions of RSA 483:9, V.

Env-Ws 1905.03 Publication, Hearing, and Opportunity for Public Comment on Protected Instream Flows.

(a) After the protected instream flow study has been prepared, and prior to establishment of protected instream flows for a designated river or segment, the department shall make the study available for public review and hold a public hearing, in accordance with Env-C 205, to receive comments.

(b) The department shall use the comments received during the public hearing and comment period to review the proposed protected instream flow relative to the following factors:

- (1) The outstanding characteristics identified in RSA 483:1;
- (2) The factors identified in RSA 483:6, IV(a);
- (3) The instream public uses identified in RSA 483:9-c;
- (4) Water quality standards;
- (5) Flows established pursuant to existing Federal Energy Regulatory Commission licensing processes or state contracts;
- (6) Whether there are wastewater discharges that require a certain instream flow for permit compliance or maintaining water quality standards;
- (7) Whether the river contains flow-regulating structures such as dams, and if so, how such structures are used to manage flow;
- (8) Information relevant to flow conditions that will conserve, protect, maintain, or restore aquatic life or habitat, or both;
- (9) Information relevant to flow conditions that will conserve, protect, maintain, or restore recreational uses;
- (10) Information relevant to flow conditions that will conserve, protect, maintain, or restore resources for which the river is designated;
- (11) Data from stream gages;
- (12) Watershed characteristics;
- (13) Pertinent resource management plans including, but not limited to, fisheries management plans, watershed management plans, and recreation management plans; and
- (14) Other information relevant to the proposed protected instream flows.

(c) The hearing shall be held in a community through or past which the designated river flows.

(d) At least 30 days before the hearing, the department shall issue a notice of hearing, including locations where a copy of the study may be obtained, in a newspaper of local circulation, and on the department's website.

(e) At least 30 days before the hearing, the department shall send written notice of the hearing and study availability, and solicit comment from, the following:

- (1) Affected water users in the WMPA;
- (2) Affected dam owners in the WMPA;
- (3) Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, for each WMPA with a licensed or exempted hydropower site;
- (4) LMAC members;
- (5) LRMAC members for the designated river;
- (6) The governing body of each municipality through or past which the designated river flows;
- (7) The National Park Service;
- (8) The New Hampshire department of justice;
- (9) The New Hampshire public utilities commission;
- (10) RMAC members;
- (11) The governor of any state which shares a designated river;
- (12) The United States Environmental Protection Agency;
- (13) The United States Fish And Wildlife Service;
- (14) The United States Forest Service, for each designated river inside the White Mountain National Forest;
- (15) The United States Geological Survey; and
- (16) Persons who have requested in writing to be notified of the hearing.

(f) At the public hearing, the department shall specify a comment period which shall close at least 30 days after the hearing date, during which time the department shall accept written comments on the factors pertaining to the proposed protected instream flows.

Env-Ws 1905.04 Establishment of Protected Instream Flows.

(a) Within 60 days of the close of the public comment period, the department shall issue a decision establishing protected instream flows for the designated river that meet the criteria in RSA 483:1 and 483:2.

(b) The decision shall:

- (1) Be in writing;
- (2) State the scientific basis for the established flow(s);
- (3) Include an assessment of how the established flows will meet applicable water quality standards;
- (4) Include the assessment required by RSA 483:9-c, III;
- (5) Summarize the comments received; and
- (6) Explain how the comments affected the decision.

(c) The department shall provide copies of the decision to:

- (1) Persons identified in Env-Ws 1905.03(e);
- (2) Persons who submitted written comments on the proposed flows; and
- (3) Persons who requested to receive a copy of the notice of the established flows.

Env-Ws 1905.05 Petition for Change of an Established Protected Instream Flow.

(a) A person may file a petition with the department for change of an established protected instream flow.

(b) The petition shall be in writing.

(c) The petition shall include:

- (1) The name, address, and daytime telephone number of the person requesting change;
- (2) If the person requesting change is not an individual, the name of an individual who can be contacted on behalf of the organization requesting the change;
- (3) A clear and concise statement of the specific change of an established protected instream flow requested;



(4) A list of the outstanding characteristics identified in RSA 483:1, the resources identified in RSA 483:6, IV (a), and the instream public uses identified in RSA 483:9-c applicable to the river segment for which change of a protected instream flow is being requested;

(5) An explanation of how change of protected instream flows would conserve and protect the factors identified under (4) above;

(6) An explanation of how a change of protected instream flows would meet water quality standards;

(7) A full explanation of why protected instream flows should be changed on the designated river; and

(8) Any factors identified in (4) above, that the petitioner believes the department should re-evaluate;

(9) Data not available or not considered at the time the protected instream flow was established; and

(10) Other reasons for requesting change of the protected instream flow.

(d) Within 30 days of receiving a petition for change of the protected instream flow, the department shall:

(1) Deny the petition and affirm the established protected instream flow; or

(2) Grant the petition and begin reconsideration of the protected instream flow.

(e) The department shall grant the petition if the information in the petition or other information reviewed by the department indicates that the established protected instream flows are not correct, and if the petition is complete as described in (d) above.

(f) The department's decision shall:

(1) Be in writing;

(2) Be sent to the person who petitioned for the change of the instream flow and to any other person who has asked to be notified of the decision in writing;

(3) Be made available electronically to the general public; and

(4) State the reason(s) for the decision, whether the decision is to deny the petition or to reconsider established protected instream flows.

(g) If the department grants the petition, the department shall establish revised protected instream flows by the process set forth in Env-Ws 1905.01.

(h) As specified in RSA 483:9-c, VI, the commissioner's decision on the petition may be appealed in accordance with RSA 541.

(i) The department shall initiate action to reconsider a protected instream flow by the processes set forth in Env-Ws 1905.01 if there are changed conditions in the watershed that warrant re-evaluation of the flows.

## PART Env-Ws 1906 PROCEDURE FOR ADOPTION OF WATER MANAGEMENT PLANS

### Env-Ws 1906.01 Elements of a Water Management Plan.

(a) The department shall prepare a water management plan that sets forth how the protected instream flows established under Part Env-Ws 1905 for a designated river or segment shall be maintained.

(b) The water management plan shall include:

- (1) A conservation plan, as provided in Env-Ws 1906.02;
- (2) A water use plan, as provided in Env-Ws 1906.03; and
- (3) A dam management plan, as provided in Env-Ws 1906.04.

(c) The department shall:

(1) Notify each affected water user and affected dam owner in the WMPA by certified mail that:

a. A water management plan is being prepared; and

b. The plan will be enforceable.

(2) Notify each affected water user in the WMPA by certified mail that the water user is strongly encouraged to participate in the process by providing information that will help the department understand that user's water use;

(3) Notify each affected dam owner in the WMPA by certified mail that the dam owner is strongly encouraged to participate in the process by providing information that will help the department understand their impoundment's operation and uses;

(4) Meet with each affected water user and affected dam owner in the WMPA and discuss protected instream flow requirements;

- (5) Make the water management plan available for public review;
- (6) Conduct a public hearing and receive comments as provided in Env-Ws 1906.06;  
and
- (7) Issue a written decision as provided in Env-Ws 1906.07.

Env-Ws 1906.02 Conservation Plan.

- (a) The department shall prepare a conservation plan.
- (b) The conservation plan shall:
  - (1) Identify all affected water users in the WMPA;
  - (2) Determine affected water user types within the WMPA, and identify conservation measures and best management practices applicable to each type of affected water user;
  - (3) For each affected water user in the WMPA, include a report of water use patterns, needs, and the potential for conservation based on specific water-use data and information from department records, site visits, and meetings, which includes the following information:
    - a. A complete description of all water use including:
      - 1. Water source(s) and destination(s);
      - 2. Anticipated demand for water that describes maximum, minimum, and average water withdrawal rates, schedules, and durations;
      - 3. Factors that control water demand such as consumer choice, delivery contracts, availability, crop needs, manufacturing runs, seasonal occupancy, and precipitation;
      - 4. Projected growth or decline in the demand for water and a description of the factors that control the growth or decline in demand for water; and
      - 5. A description of how the water is used including a description and a percent estimate of the total volume of water used for each applicable process or need;
    - b. An evaluation of all water conservation opportunities employed, including:
      - 1. An assessment of changes to historic water demand;
      - 2. Leak detection and repair activities;

3. Water audits and preventative maintenance programs;
4. Employee education pertaining to water conservation practices; and
5. Other water conservation opportunities;

c. A detailed description of past and present water conservation efforts, effectiveness, and cost;

d. A description of water conservation best management practices and technologies applicable to the types of water-using processes;

e. A detailed summary of water conservation measures that might be implemented during the next 5 years including a quantitative estimate of the water savings associated with these measures;

f. An economic assessment of the cost to implement the water conservation plan; and

g. A detailed summary of any efforts to implement or develop new processes or technologies that may result in additional water conservation opportunities;

(4) For each affected water user in the WMPA, include a conservation implementation schedule with quantitative water use reduction targets, which includes:

- a. A description of water conservation measures to be implemented;
- b. Target dates for the implementation of water conservation measures; and
- c. A description of a process to monitor and evaluate the results of, and compliance with, the water conservation plan.

(c) The conservation implementation schedule shall be based on the results of meetings and discussions with the affected water user.

(d) If, based on meetings and discussions with the affected water user, the department determines that no conservation measures will be implemented, then the conservation plan shall:

- (1) Contain the statement, "No conservation measures are to be implemented," and no target dates or process descriptions as described in (4)b and (4)c above, respectively, shall be required;
- (2) Not include target dates for implementation of water conservation measures; and

(3) Not include a description of a process to monitor and document results of water conservation measures.

(e) If the department develops a conservation implementation schedule that is not agreed to by the affected water user, the schedule in (4) above shall include the sentence “This conservation measure has not been agreed to by the affected water user.”

(f) The economic assessment identified in (b)(3)f above shall:

(1) Include an estimate of implementation costs of the conservation plan for each affected water user;

(2) Incorporate the conservation implementation schedules in (b)(4) above; and

(3) Include any other identified economic factors not attributable to affected water users.

Env-Ws 1906.03 Water Use Plan.

(a) The department shall prepare a water use plan.

(b) The water use plan shall:

(1) Include the water use data and information collected under Env-Ws 1906.02(b)(3) to define water use patterns and needs of each affected water user within the WMPA;

(2) For each affected water user in the WMPA, include a report describing the potential for water use modification, sharing, or both, to meet protected instream flow requirements, including water use patterns and needs as determined in (1) above;

(3) With the assistance of the public utilities commission, assess the effect of the protected instream flow on each existing hydroelectric power facility within or upstream from the designated river or segment;

(4) For each affected water user in the WMPA, include an individual water use plan so that the net effect of implementation of all individual plans, in coordination with implementation of the dam management plan, is maintenance of the protected instream flows; and

(5) For each affected water user in the WMPA, include an implementation schedule for the individual water use plan.

(c) The department shall:

- (1) Coordinate negotiations among affected dam owners, affected water users and other applicable interests towards water use and dam management that will meet protected instream flow requirements and the existing uses of reservoirs; and
  - (2) Prepare an economic assessment of the cost to implement the water use plan.
- (d) The economic assessment shall:
- (1) Include an estimate of implementation costs of the plan for each affected water user;
  - (2) Incorporate the implementation schedules in (b)(5) above; and
  - (3) Include any other identified economic factors not attributable to affected water users.

Env-Ws 1906.04 Dam Management Plan.

- (a) The department shall prepare a dam management plan.
- (b) The dam management plan shall:
- (1) Include data and information from department sources, site visits, and interviews with each affected dam owner or their operator on characteristics and operational procedures of affected dams within the WMPA including:
    - a. The name of the dam;
    - b. The name of the town where the dam is located;
    - c. The name, address, and telephone number of owner, operator or both;
    - d. The emergency contact person and phone number;
    - e. The dam state ID number;
    - f. The dam status as either active or inactive;
    - g. The name of the water body impounded by dam and the downstream river;
    - h. The designated use(s) of the impoundment;
    - i. The elevation, in feet, of the recreational pool or height relative to the lowest spillway;
    - j. The elevation, in feet, of additional spillway crest(s) or height relative to the lowest spillway;

- k. The elevation, in feet, of streambed at the dam centerline or the height relative to the lowest spillway;
- l. The elevation, in feet, of the top of the dam or dam height relative to the lowest spillway;
- m. The height of the dam, in feet, from toe to the highest point on the dam;
- n. The freeboard, as defined in Env-Wr 101.16, in feet;
- o. The type and dimensions of spillway control(s) or outlet works;
- p. The surface area, in acres of impoundment at maximum impoundment;
- q. The drainage area, in square miles;
- r. The maximum storage, in acre-feet, which is the volume of water which could be impounded above the natural pond or stream elevation, with the water level at the top of dam, or with the water level at the highest elevation which could be hydrologically attained, if this elevation is below the top of dam;
- s. The normal storage, in acre-feet, which is the volume of water impounded above the natural pond or stream elevation when the water level is at the spillway crest;
- t. Descriptions of the type, dimensions, invert elevation, and when available, discharge capacity at the water surface elevation of normal storage, or rating curves, or both, of each outlet structure of the dam;
- u. The maximum unoperated discharge, in cubic feet per second (cfs);
- v. The design storm discharge, in cfs;
- w. The estimated 50-year flood flow, in cfs;
- x. The estimated 100-year flood flow, in cfs;
- y. Any contractual obligations, minimum flow requirements and flowage rights;
- z. An operation and maintenance plan summary;
- aa. A description of any interests of riparian property owners to the impoundment;  
and

ab. A description of any water quality standards factors related to the impoundment;

(2) For each affected dam in the WMPA, include a report describing:

- a. The potential water available for release to maintain protected instream flows;
- b. The ecological and other impacts to the impoundment and downstream river reaches which might restrict the use of such waters for augmentation flows; and
- c. The potential for dam management to meet instream flow requirements, including dam operation patterns, physical structure, and needs as determined in (b) above;

(3) For each affected dam in the WMPA, include an individual dam management plan so that the net effect of implementation of all individual plans, in coordination with implementation of the water use plan, is maintenance of the protected instream flows; and

(4) For each affected dam in the WMPA, include an implementation schedule for the individual dam management plan.

(c) The department shall:

- (1) Meet with each affected dam owner to explain protected instream flow requirements;
- (2) Coordinate negotiations among affected dam owners, affected water users, and other applicable interests toward water use and dam management that will meet protected instream flow requirements and the existing uses of the reservoirs; and
- (3) Prepare an economic assessment of the cost to implement the dam management plan.

(d) The economic assessment shall:

- (1) Include an estimate of implementation costs of the plan for each affected dam owner;
- (2) Incorporate the implementation schedules in (b)(4) above; and
- (3) Include any other identified economic factors not attributable to affected dam owners.



(a) The department shall prepare a water management plan document specifying the conservation measures and operational measures that will be implemented by each affected water user and affected dam operator in the WMPA to meet the protected instream flow requirements.

(b) The plan shall include an implementation schedule for each measure identified in (a) above.

(c) For affected water users engaged in agriculture or public water supply, the plan shall:

- (1) Identify any local, state, or federal financial assistance programs that could provide funding for plan implementation;
- (2) Estimate the amount of financial assistance available; and
- (3) Estimate the schedule for receiving assistance.

(d) For affected water users engaged in agriculture or public water supply, the implementation schedule shall:

- (1) Incorporate the availability and estimated schedule of financial assistance;
- (2) Allow flexibility to account for unforeseen changes in availability and timetable of financial assistance if the affected water user is engaged in a good faith effort to procure such assistance.

(e) The department shall make the draft water management plan available for public review at least 30 days before the hearing and opportunity for public comment as specified in Env-Ws 1906.06.

Env-Ws 1906.06 Hearing and Opportunity for Public Comment on Water Management Plans.

(a) Prior to adoption of a water management plan for a designated river or segment, the department shall hold a public hearing, in accordance with Env-C 205, to receive public comment.

(b) The department shall use the comments received during the public hearing and comment period to review the proposed water management plan relative to the following factors:

- (1) The outstanding characteristics identified in RSA 483:1;
- (2) The resources identified in RSA 483:6, IV(a);
- (3) Instream public uses identified in RSA 483:9-c;
- (4) Water quality standards;

- (5) The extent to which implementation of the water management plan will maintain the established protected instream flows;
  - (6) Whether there are affected water users or affected dam owners in the WMPA that have failed to provide information or participate in good faith in negotiations for development of the plan;
  - (7) The reasons affected water users or affected dam owners object to provisions of the proposed plan;
  - (8) Information relevant to conservation, water use, or dam operation which has not been considered in preparation of the proposed plan;
  - (9) Information relevant to implementation of the proposed plan; and
  - (10) Other information relevant to the proposed plan.
- (c) The hearing shall be held in a community through or past which the designated river flows.
- (d) At least 30 days before the hearing, the department shall issue a notice of the hearing in a newspaper of local circulation and send written notice of the public hearing to and solicit comment from the following:
- (1) Affected water users in the WMPA;
  - (2) Affected dam owners in the WMPA;
  - (3) The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, for each designated river with a licensed or exempted hydropower site;
  - (4) LMAC members;
  - (5) LRMAC members for the designated river;
  - (6) The governing body of each municipality through or past which the designated river flows;
  - (7) The National Park Service;
  - (8) The New Hampshire department of justice;
  - (9) The New Hampshire public utilities commission;
  - (10) RMAC members;

- (11) The governor of any state which shares a designated river;
- (12) The United States Environmental Protection Agency;
- (13) The United States Fish And Wildlife Service;
- (14) The United States Forest Service, for each designated river inside the White Mountain National Forest;
- (15) The United States Geological Survey; and
- (16) Persons who have requested in writing to be notified of the hearing.

(e) At the public hearing, the department shall specify a comment period which shall close at least 30 days after the hearing date, during which time the department shall accept written comments on the factors pertaining to the proposed water management plan.

Env-Ws 1906.07 Adoption of Water Management Plans.

(a) Within 60 days of the close of the public comment period, the department shall:

- (1) Review all comments received; and
- (2) Revise the plan if testimony received shows that the plan does not meet the criteria in (b) below.

(b) The commissioner shall adopt the plan if:

- (1) The plan contains the 3 major elements described in Env-Ws 1906.01(b);
- (2) The conservation plan contains goals and timelines for each affected water user;
- (3) Implementation of the water management plan will result in maintenance of the established protected instream flows; and
- (4) Implementation of the water management plan will enhance or not diminish the enjoyment of outstanding river characteristics including recreational, fisheries, wildlife, environmental, cultural, historical, archaeological, scientific, ecological, aesthetic, community significance, agriculture and public water supply as outstanding characteristics of the river or segment.

(c) The adopted water management plan shall:

- (1) Be in writing;
- (2) Summarize comments received by the department; and

- (3) Explain how the comments affected the adopted plan.
- (d) The department shall provide copies of the adopted plan to:
  - (1) Persons identified in Env-Ws 1906.06(d);
  - (2) Persons who submitted written comments on the draft plan; and
  - (3) Persons who requested to receive a copy of the plan.

Env-Ws 1906.08 Petition for Changes to an Adopted Water Management Plan.

- (a) A person may file a petition with the department for change of an adopted plan when:
  - (1) There is a new affected water user in the WMPA;
  - (2) An existing affected water user desires to increase water use;
  - (3) An existing affected water user has changes in timing of water use;
  - (4) An existing affected water user has decreased water use; or
  - (5) There are changes in water use or operating conditions for an affected water user or affected dam owner.
- (b) The petition shall be in writing.
- (c) The petition shall include:
  - (1) The name, address, and daytime telephone number of the person petitioning for change;
  - (2) If the person petitioning for change is not an individual, the name of an individual who can be contacted on behalf of the organization petitioning for change;
  - (3) A clear and concise statement of the specific change being sought to the plan;
  - (4) An explanation of how the change to the adopted plan is consistent with maintenance of established protected instream flows and water quality standards;
  - (5) Documentation that all affected water users and affected dam owners to whom the change applies have agreed to the change, or if all have not agreed, an explanation of the reasons for failure to agree;

(6) If applicable, any factors the petitioner believes the department should reevaluate; and

(7) Data not available or considered at the time the plan was adopted.

(d) The department shall grant the petition if the information in the petition indicates that criteria in (a) above for changes to a water management plan are met, and if the petition is complete as described in (c) above.

(e) The department shall deny a petition for change that is based on information available to the requesting party when the water management plan was prepared, but not submitted to the department in a timely fashion.

(f) Within 30 days of receiving a petition for change, the department shall:

(1) Deny the petition and affirm the adopted plan; or

(2) Grant the petition and begin reconsideration of the provisions of the plan requested in the petition.

(g) The department's decision shall:

(1) Be in writing;

(2) Be sent to the person who requested the change of the water management plan and to any other person who has asked to be notified of the decision in writing;

(3) Be made available electronically to the general public; and

(4) State the reason(s) for the decision, whether the decision is to deny the petition or to grant the petition and reconsider the specified provisions of the water management plan.

(h) If the department grants the petition, the department shall within 30 days of the decision, initiate action to reconsider a water management plan by the processes described in Env-Ws 1906.01.

(i) The department shall initiate action to reconsider a water management plan by the processes described in Env-Ws 1906.01 if there are changed conditions in the watershed that warrant re-evaluation of the plan.

## PART Env-Ws 1907 ADMINISTRATION OF WATER MANAGEMENT PLANS

Env-Ws 1907.01 Compliance with Adopted Water Management Plan. Affected water users and affected dam owners shall comply with the provisions of an adopted water management plan.

Env-Ws 1907.02 Protected Instream Flows and Water Quality Criteria. Protected instream flows established by the commissioner shall serve as water quality criteria for the purpose of administration of water quality standards by the department under the federal Clean Water Act.

## PART Env-Ws 1908 WAIVERS

### Env-Ws 1908.01 Waivers

(a) The rules contained in this part are intended to apply to a variety of conditions and circumstances. It is recognized that strict compliance with all rules prescribed herein might not fit every conceivable situation. Affected persons may request a waiver of specific rules outlined in this part in accordance with paragraph (b) below.

(b) All requests for waivers shall:

(1) Be submitted in writing to the department; and

(2) Include the following information:

a. A description of the designated river and water use, instream public use or resource to which the waiver request relates;

b. A specific reference to the section of the rule for which a waiver is being sought;

c. A full explanation of why a waiver is necessary and demonstration of the effect caused if the rule is adhered to;

d. A full explanation of the alternatives for which a waiver is sought with supporting data; and

e. A full explanation of how the alternatives for which a waiver is sought are consistent with the intent of RSA 483:9-c, would have a just result, and would adequately protect human health and the environment.

(c) The department shall grant a waiver if the department finds that the alternatives proposed are at least equivalent to the requirements contained in this chapter, meet water quality standards, and are adequate to ensure that the provisions of RSA 483:9-c are met.

(d) The department shall not grant any waiver that contravenes the intent of any rule, or conflicts with any statute.

(e) The department shall issue a written response to a request for a waiver.

(f) If the waiver is denied, the department shall specifically set forth the reason(s) for the denial.

- (g) The department shall grant a waiver for a specific time period not to exceed 10 years.